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ABSTRACT

This paper draws upon a theory of stories that relates particular text structures to particular affective states and then relates the affective states to story intuitions and overall judgments of liking. The first section of the paper outlines the theory as it deals with some important properties of the genre of popular stories in Western literature. The second section describes a recent series of experiments suggesting that this structural-affect theory accounts for a number of aspects of the story schema in English speaking readers. The next two sections provide an analytic framework that can be used to examine the conventionalized aspects of stories and then apply this framework to cross cultural work on oral literature. The final section presents some hypotheses about the nature of the universal and culture-specific aspects of stories from the oral tradition and contrasts them with those of written stories from Western popular literature. (FL)

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Technical Report No. 322

THE STORY SCHEMA: UNIVERSAL AND CULTURE-SPECIFIC PROPERTIES

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The Story Schema:
Universal and Culture-Specific Properties

The first section of this chapter outlines a theory of stories that deals with some important properties of the genre of popular stories in Western literature. The second section of the paper describes a recent series of experiments suggesting that this structural-affect theory of stories accounts for a number of aspects of the story schema in English-speaking readers. The next two sections provide an analytic framework that can be used to examine the conventionalized aspects of stories and then applies this framework to cross-cultural work on oral literature. The final section presents some hypotheses about the nature of the universal and culture-specific aspects of stories from the oral tradition and contrast these features with those of written stories from Western popular literature.

A Theory of Stories

The basic theory of stories sketched here has been presented in Brewer and Lichtenstein (1981, 1982, submitted). This theory relates particular text structures to particular affective states and then relates the affective states to story intuitions and overall judgements of liking. The goal of the theory is to give an account of the story schema of literate English-speaking adults.

The Narrative Component

In the narrative component of the theory we distinguish between event structure and discourse structure. The event structure that underlies a narrative consists of a series of events arranged in temporal order with respect to some real or imaginary world. The events are structured through the use of plan schemas and causal schemas (Schank & Abelson, 1977; Schmidt, Sridharan & Goodson, 1978). These schemas that underlie narratives are presumably the same ones that are used to structure the observed actions of objects and people in the ordinary world (cf., Brewer & Dupree, 1983; van Dijk, 1975; Lichtenstein & Brewer, 1980).

Discourse structure refers to the sequential arrangement of events in the narrative. For a given event sequence there will be many possible discourse sequences. The term discourse is meant to be modality free: the discourse order of a written narrative is the particular arrangement of the events in the text, the discourse order of an oral narrative is the particular arrangement of the events in the spoken presentation, and the discourse order of a motion picture is the particular arrangement of the events in the film.

The distinction between event and discourse is a traditional one in structuralist theories of literature. The Russian Formalists were very clear on this issue and referred to the two

levels as the "fabula" and the "sjuzet" (cf. Chatman, 1978, for a review).

The author of a narrative has enormous freedom to omit or rearrange events in the discourse. A theory of the reader's narrative schema should give an account of the psychological processes that the reader uses to go from the presented discourse organization to the underlying event organization (see Brewer, 1980, 1982). Thus, for example, it would give an account of the effects on comprehension of flashbacks in a text. There is as yet no detailed account of the narrative schema for English (however, see Johnson & Mandler, 1980, for a start).

The Affective Component

The affective component attempts to capture the fact that stories are intended to entertain and that they carry out this function by evoking affects such as suspense and surprise. As part of a general theory of aesthetics, Berlyne (1971) has attempted to relate several general patterns of emotional response to pleasure and enjoyment. In particular, Berlyne has postulated that enjoyment is produced by moderate increases in arousal ("arousal boost") or by a temporary sharp rise in general arousal followed by arousal reduction ("arousal jag"). If both processes operate together, then pleasure is produced both by the rise in arousal and by the subsequent drop in arousal ("arousal-boost-jag"). The affective component of the story theory

attempts to apply this more general hedonic theory to the domain of stories.

The Structural-Affect Component

The structural-affect component of the theory relates particular discourse structures to particular affective states produced in the reader. This component of the theory has been greatly influenced by contemporary structural approaches to literary theory (Barthes, 1974; Chatman, 1978; Culler, 1975; & Sternberg, 1978).

In several recent papers (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981, 1982, submitted), we have proposed three major discourse structures (surprise, suspense, curiosity) which we claim underlie the structure of a large proportion of popular stories from Western culture. Each of these discourse structures is based on a different arrangement of the discourse with respect to the underlying event structure, each is designed to produce a particular affect.

Surprise. An event structure capable of producing surprise must contain critical expository or event information early in the event sequence. This information is critical in the sense that it is necessary for the correct interpretation of the event sequence. In a surprise discourse structure, the author withholds this critical information from the beginning of the discourse structure without letting the reader know that something has been withheld. Then, at the end of the discourse,

the author reveals the information, and the reader is surprised. The surprise is resolved when the reader successfully reinterprets the event sequence in light of the unexpected critical information. An example of a minimal surprise discourse structure is: "Marian walked into her bedroom. She opened her closet door to reach for her nightgown and saw a hand holding a knife." In the underlying even sequence, the person with the knife entered the closet before Marian walked into her bedroom. However, the author has deliberately withheld this critical information from the discourse in order to produce surprise in the reader.

Suspense. An event structure capable of producing suspense must contain an initiating event or situation. An initiating event is an event that could lead to significant consequences (either good or bad) for one of the characters in the narrative. The event structure must also contain the outcome of the initiating event. In a suspense discourse structure the discourse is organized with the initiating event early in the discourse. The initiating event causes the reader to become concerned about the potential outcome (see Jose & Brewer, in press). Then the discourse typically contains some additional material in order to prolong the suspense; and finally the outcome is given, resolving the suspense for the reader. Thus, in a simple suspense discourse structure, the order of events in the discourse maps the order of events in the event structure.

An example of a minimal suspense discourse structure based on the above event sequence is: "The psychopath hid himself in the closet. Marian slowly climbed the stairs to her bedroom. Marian walked into her bedroom. She opened her closet door to reach for her nightgown and saw a hand holding a knife. She slammed the closet door and escaped out the front door." Note that it is the reader's affect which is crucial. In this example the character is presumably feeling little or no affect while walking up the stairs, yet the reader is in suspense. If the author chooses to reveal the initiating information to both the character and the reader, then both the character and the reader will experience some form of affect.

Curiosity. An event structure capable of producing curiosity must include a significant event early in the sequence. In a curiosity discourse structure the author withholds the significant event from the discourse, but (unlike the surprise discourse structure) provides enough information about the earlier event to let the reader know that the information is missing. This discourse structure leads the reader to become curious about the withheld information. The curiosity is resolved by providing enough information in the later parts of the discourse for the reader to reconstruct the omitted significant event. The classic mystery story is a good example of the curiosity discourse structure. The discourse typically opens with the discovery of the crime, and the rest of the

discourse provides information designed to allow the reader to reconstruct the significant events that occurred just before the opening of the discourse (i.e., how the crime was committed and who the criminal was). Figure 1 illustrates the three event-structure/discourse-structure relationships and gives the predicted effect curve for each.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

The Enjoyment Component

We have focused on the discourse organization component of an overall theory of narrative appreciation. In particular we have extended the work of Berlyne (1971) and have hypothesized that readers will enjoy narratives organized to produce surprise and resolution, suspense and resolution, or curiosity and resolution (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981, 1982, submitted). Thus, readers will prefer narratives with discourse structures that produce surprise to narratives with the same event structures, but not organized to produce surprise, and they will prefer narratives with suspense discourse structures that produce and resolve suspense to those that produce suspense but do not resolve it.

The Story Intuition Component

We have recently (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981, 1982, submitted; Lichtenstein & Brewer, submitted) claimed that the

three discourse structures from the structural-affect component form the major part of the concept "story" for literate adult speakers of English. Thus narratives with an initiating event and an outcome (suspense discourse structure) will be called stories, whereas narratives without an initiating event or without an outcome will not be called stories. Narratives with a critical event and resolution (surprise discourse structure) will be called stories, while narratives without a critical event or with no resolution will not be called stories; and similarly narratives with a significant event and resolution (curiosity discourse structure) will be called stories, while narratives without one or the other will not.

We argue that story intuitions (unlike judgements or liking) are not based on the actual affect produced by the narrative. Clearly one can know that a particular text is a story without liking the text or directly feeling a particular pattern of affect. Instead, we have proposed that story intuitions are mediated by two possible mechanisms: knowledge of story discourse structures and meta-affect. The structural hypothesis suggests that story intuitions are based on the reader's knowledge of the canonical discourse structures for stories. The meta-affect hypothesis suggests that the story intuitions are based on the reader's meta-knowledge about the affective responses which the events in the narrative are capable of producing.

In summary, the structural-affect theory of stories relates particular discourse structures to particular affective states and then relates both of these components to story intuitions and story enjoyment.

Empirical Results Relating to the Story Theory

Event Structure

The hypothesis that goal-directed events are interpreted in terms of plan schemas was strongly supported by the experiments reported in Lichtenstein and Brewer (1980). In that study we had subjects view video-tapes of goal-directed events (such as an actor setting up a slide projector) and then had subjects recall what they had seen. We developed a theory of the psychological representation of goal-directed events in terms of plan schemas and then tested the theory with the recall data. The data clearly support the hypothesis that observed goal-directed actions are interpreted in terms of plan schemas. Events that were higher in the goal hierarchy were recalled better than events lower in the hierarchy; actions in canonical schema order were recalled better than actions not in canonical order, and actions presented in noncanonical order tended to shift in recall to their canonical positions.

Narrative Structure

The hypothesis that event structures underlie narratives was also examined in the study by Lichtenstein and Brewer (1980). In order to relate our findings with observed events to linguistic

narrative structures, we wrote out narratives which described the videotaped events. We then carried out recall studies with these narratives and obtained basically the same results that we had obtained with the recall of the videotaped events. Hence we argued that both observed goal-directed events and written narratives are understood and recalled by means of the same plan schemas.

Since our findings for the recall of natural goal-directed events and for narratives were essentially the same as those in the story-recall literature deriving from the story grammar tradition (Mandler, 1978; Mandler & Johnson, 1977; Rumelhart, 1977; Stein & Nezworsky, 1978; Thorndyke, 1977), we argued that these studies are best interpreted as studies of memory for goal-directed events and studies of narrative structure, and not as studies of the structure of stories. Thus, for example, the finding that actions higher in the goal hierarchy are better recalled than actions lower in the hierarchy (Rumelhart, 1977; Thorndyke, 1977) is probably due to nonlinguistic plan schemas operating in recall. However, those studies which manipulated the order of events in the discourse with respect to the order of events in the event structure (Mandler, 1978; Stein & Nezworsky, 1978; Thorndyke, 1977) can be looked at as investigations of narrative structure, with the general finding that narratives are generally easier to understand and remember if the discourse order maps the event order. A more detailed discussion of the

reinterpretation of story grammars and plan-based theories of stories can be found in Lichtenstein and Brewer (submitted) and Brewer (1982).

Structure and Affect

Data from two recent studies (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981, submitted) examined the relationship between discourse structures and affective states. In these studies we asked subjects to start reading a narrative, and then we stopped them at fixed points in the narrative and asked them to make judgements about their affect (e.g., degree of suspense, surprise, curiosity). The results were in strong agreement with the structural-affect component of the story theory. Narratives without an initiating event showed little suspense. Narratives with suspense discourse organization showed a strong rise in suspense and a drop at the point of resolution. Narratives with surprise discourse organization showed a strong rise on the surprise scale at the point where the critical information was introduced into the discourse. Narratives with curiosity discourse organization structures showed a rise in curiosity when information about the significant event was introduced and a sharp drop in curiosity when the significant event was revealed in the discourse structure. See Figure 2 for an example of the suspense and surprise curves for one narrative from Brewer and Lichtenstein (1981).

Insert Figure 2 about here.

Story Intuitions

Data from the two studies just outlined (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981; submitted) also supported the story intuition component of our theory. In addition to asking the subjects to make affect ratings, we also asked them to rate the narratives on the degree to which they were stories or nonstories. The data were in good agreement with the theory outlined earlier. Narratives without an initiating event or without an outcome were not considered to be stories. However narratives with suspense discourse structures, surprise discourse structures or curiosity discourse structures were all considered to be stories.

Thus, the findings from a variety of studies suggest that the structural-affect theory of stories is capable of handling a wide range of data concerning event structure, discourse structure, affective curves, and story intuitions. However, this theory was designed to deal with written stories from Western culture and has been tested with readers from the same culture. The next section of the paper will explore the implications the theory has for the cross-cultural study of stories.

Cross-Cultural Nature of the Story Schema: Empirical Findings

There have been two recent empirical studies directed at the issue of the universality of the story schema, and they arrive at opposite conclusions. Kintsch and Greene (1978) conclude that story schemas are culture specific, while Mandler, Scribner, Cole and DeForest (1980) conclude that there is a universal story schema.

Kintsch and Green investigated the issue by having Colorado undergraduates write summaries of four Western short stories (from the Decameron) and four native Alaskan narratives. They found that the undergraduates could write better summaries of the Western short stories than they could of the Alaskan narratives. In a second experiment Colorado undergraduates were asked to carry out recall of a Western fairy story and an Apache story. Recall was better for the fairy story. Since Kintsch and Greene used only members of one culture for this study, it is an incomplete experimental design. Without data from Alaskan and Apache subjects showing the reverse pattern of results one cannot know if the findings were due to a mismatch between the subjects' story schema and the texts or if the particular nonEnglish tests chosen were simply intrinsincally harder to recall for individuals from any culture. Nevertheless, Kintsch and Greene conclude that the data show that story schemas are culture specific.

Mandler, Scribner, Cole and DeForest (1980) studied the issue by having American children and adults and Liberian children and adults listen to and recall four Western folktales and one Liberian folktale. They found that the amount and pattern of recall for the two groups were quite similar. They suggest, on the basis of these findings, that the structure of folktales may be a cultural universal.

The basic problem with these empirical studies is that they are based on theories of stories that do not distinguish between event structure, narrative structure, and story structure. The results of a cross-cultural study using stories are not analytic unless the study is designed to distinguish between these three types of information. If one carries out a cross cultural study using stories as stimuli and finds a difference between culture X and culture Y, then one does not know if the two cultures differed at the level of event and plan schemas, at the level of narrative schemas, or at the level of story schemas.

The next section of the paper attempts to use the analytic framework, developed for studying stories in Western culture, to examine the issue of the cultural specificity or universality of the story schema. This approach has the advantage of bringing a theory to bear on the problem, but the disadvantage of letting a laboratory scientist loose in the complex world of cross-cultural anthropology.

The Story Schema: Culture Specific Properties

Events

Clearly the members of a particular culture have knowledge of a wide variety of culture-specific goal-directed actions, e.g., hosting a potlatch ceremony, operating a Xerox machine, sending a drum message. Knowledge of this type is one very important aspect of an individual's culture, but it must be carefully distinguished from narrative and story schemas. Consider the following thought experiment: An American college undergraduate and a member of the Txikaos tribe from the Amazon Basin watch two different goal-directed actions: (a) someone setting up a slide projector and (b) someone preparing materials for a complex Txikaos religious ceremony. If we then ask the two individuals to explain the two actions to us or to recall the two action sequences, we would almost certainly get enormous culture-specific differences. Each individual would be attempting to apply plan schemas to both actions, but would not be successful for the cross-culture actions, since they would not be able to fully understand the particular goals and intentions of the actors in the cross-culture episode. If we described the two action sequences in narrative form and carried out a recall study we would expect similar culture-specific results, yet this difference would be due to the culture-specific nature of the underlying goal-directed actions and would tell us nothing about the cultural specificity of narrative or story schemas.

In fact, Steffensen and Colker (1982) have recently carried out a version of this design with narrative materials. They asked Australian Aboriginal women and women from the United States to recall two narratives: one narrative described a child becoming sick and being treated by Western medical practices, and the other described a child becoming sick and being treated by Aboriginal native medicine. They obtained the expected culture-specific results, with each group showing much better recall for the same-culture narrative than for the cross-culture narrative. Each group was using culture-specific knowledge about the intentions and goals of the actors to interpret the action sequences described in the narratives.

Narratives

Culture-specific aspects of narrative are characteristics of narratives that hold for all narratives of a culture (both story and nonstory) or for a class of nonstory narratives.

Labov (1972) has given an example that might fit this criterion. Labov had middle-class white speakers and inner-city black speakers each tell about an event that happened to them. In analyzing these narratives Labov noted one important difference in narrative form. He found that middle-class white narrators tended to use "external evaluation." They interrupted the narrative and made explicit comments about their feelings or emphasized the point they were trying to make. The inner-city black narrators tended to us "internal evaluation." They did not

interrupt the narrative, but got information across by using exact quotations or by describing an external action that would act as a sign of an internal state. This distinction is similar to the distinction between "telling" and "showing" in written narratives (cf., Booth, 1961, Ch. 1). Labov's data thus suggests that there are cultural differences in narratives of personal experience with respect to how the narrator chooses to convey certain types of information to the listener.

Tannen (1980) has compared narratives told by Greek speakers and English speakers describing a short film. She reports a variety of culture-specific narrative choices by the two groups, e.g., the Greek narrators tended to include more specific judgements about the actions of the characters. Thus, it seems likely that additional cross-cultural work will show a variety of culture-specific characteristics in the narrative schema.

Stories: Oral

In this section an attempt is made to identify the culture-specific characteristics of stories that are true reflections of story structure and not merely reflections of culture-specific event structure or narrative structure. First we will examine stories from oral literature.

The oral literature of nonliterate cultures typically includes a wide variety of genres--folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles (Bascom, 1965; Ben-Amos, 1981; Brunvand, 1968; Finnegan, 1970). Essentially all cultures have one or more

narrative genres designed primarily to entertain (Bascom, 1965, p. 4; Brunvand, 1968, p. 103; Finnegan, 1967, p. 60; Degh, 1972, p. 60; Smith, 1940, p. 64). For the purposes of the cross-cultural analysis we will focus on the broad class of "stories," where the term is taken to include all long narratives designed primarily for entertainment (see Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1982, pp. 477-478).

The purpose of this analysis of stories from oral literature is to uncover the aspects of these narratives that are specific to stories. Thus, we must look for culture-specific story conventions. A story convention is revealed by the differential occurrence of some feature in stories when compared to ordinary spoken language or to other specialized genres. In Table 1 we attempt to provide an overall framework for the study of story conventions. Along the left side of the table are the basic story elements: opening, setting, characters, events, resolution, epilogue, closing and narrator. Along the top of the table are the basic discourse options: (a) The discourse can include a particular story element or omit it. (b) The element can be made explicit in the discourse or can be included in some more indirect fashion. (c) For a given story element the type can vary. (d) The point in the discourse when an element is first introduced can vary. (e) An element can be repeated or not in the discourse. (f) For events, the discourse order can be the same as the underlying event order or it can vary.

Insert Table 1 about here.

Reflecting the basic story elements across the basic discourse options produces, to a first approximation, an inventory of possible story conventions. In the rest of this section oral literature from a diverse set of cultures is examined in order to see what different types of story conventions have been observed and thus what the characteristics of culture-specific story schemas are. We will examine the issue for each narrative element in turn (i.e., row by row).

Openings. Conventionalized story openings occur widely throughout the world (Finnegan, 1970, p. 379-380; Jacobs, 1964, p. 334). Some of these openings use conventionalized setting information such as the "He lived there" of the Clackamas Indians of the American Northwest or "Once upon a time" from the Western oral tradition (Thompson, 1977, p. 457). Others are so formulaic that they have no other meaning; for example, the Zuni story opening is said to be untranslatable (Tedlock, 1972, p. 123).

Setting. In order to show that setting information is story specific it is necessary to show that its occurrence in stories differs from its occurrence in nonstory narratives. Jacobs gives some good examples from American Indian cultures. He states that in some of these oral literatures there was a small set of obligatory forms of location and/or time from which the setting

must be selected. Thus for a particular culture the setting might have to include "he left the village" (1964, p. 335). The Kham of Nepal actually have an explicit verb form that distinguishes setting information from event information, though it is not clear if this story specific (Watters, 1978). It appears that many North American Indian cultures omitted descriptive setting information relating to nature (Jacobs, 1964, p. 336; Shimkin, 1947, p. 341). Dégh notes that European folktales have a conventionalized setting in the Middle Ages (1972, p. 64).

Characters. There are clear differences in conventionalized characters across cultures. Thus the protagonist of trickster stories is a coyote among North American Indians (Thompson, 1977, p. 319), a rabbit among cultures in Central Africa, and a spider in West Africa (Finnegan, 1970, p. 337). A number of authors have suggested that little detail describing characters is given in stories from the oral tradition: the Limba of West Africa (Finnegan, 1967, p. 52); the Zuni of the American Southwest (Tedlock, 1972, p. 130). There are a variety of conventional ways of introducing the characters of stories. The Longuda of Nigeria (Newman, 1978, p. 103) and the Khaling of Nepal (Toba, 1978, p. 158) both require that all the characters be introduced at the beginning of the story. The Hanga of Ghana conventionally introduce the villian before the hero (Hunt, 1978, p. 241), while among the Sherpa of Nepal the order of character introduction is

victim, villain, hero (Schöneldreyer, 1978, p. 253). A very common characteristic of oral literature is the repetition of character types (e.g., three brothers, three monsters). The number of repetitions varies from culture to culture. It is five for the Clackamas of the Pacific Northwest (Jacobs, 1959, p. 224); it is four for Navaho (Toelken, 1981, p. 167), it is three for stories in the Western oral tradition, e.g., "The Three Bears" (Olrik, 1909/1965). The order of introduction for a set of repeated characters is often conventional. A very common pattern is for the conventionalized number of brothers to be introduced (and carry out their actions) in order from oldest to youngest, with the youngest finally successful. This pattern occurs in the Navaho (Toelken, 1981, p. 167), the Nez Percé (Stross, 1972, p. 110) the Clackamas (Jacobs, 1959, p. 227) and the Western oral tradition (Olrik, 1909/1965, p. 136).

Events. In order to show that some aspect of the story events are conventionalized one must show that they differ in some way from the events actually occurring in the culture. Thus, the fact that seal hunting occurs in Eskimo stories more often than it does in Apache stories says nothing about conventionalized story events. Nevertheless there is much obvious evidence for conventionalized events. Most cultures have story characters who carry out superhuman acts--killing monsters, moving huge objects, visiting the heavens. A number of writers have noted that the events selected for inclusion in a story are

chosen for their dramatic or entertainment value (Finnegan, 1967, p. 60; Fischer, 1963, p. 237; Shimkin, 1947, p. 332; Smith, 1940, p. 67). Frequently there are conventionalized event sequences known as motifs (see, Thompson, 1977). Thus Zulu stories disposed of villains by giving them a bag of snakes and scorpions to open (Finnegan, 1970, p. 381). Many American Indian groups used a motif in which the hero ascended to the sky by a ladder made of arrows (Jacobs, 1964, p. 337). In stories from Western oral tradition there is the motif of rescuing the princess from the dragon or the motif of danger from wishes that come true (Thompson, 1977, p. 24, 134).

Examination of the ordering of events in oral literature shows much repetition and parallel development. Thus, the protagonist will carry out one act, then a second similar act; or the protagonist can repeat exactly the same act. If there are several characters with similar roles, one attempts to carry out an act (and often fails), then the second character attempts the same act, and so on. For discussions of these issues see Dégh (1972, p. 61), Finnegan (1967, p. 89), Fischer (1963, p. 249-252), Olrik (1909/1965, p. 132-134), Shimkin (1947, p. 340), and Stross (1972, p. 109-112). A number of investigators have stated that in stories from oral literature the discourse order always follows the event order (Finnegan, 1967, p. 49; Fischer, 1963, p. 249; Jacobs, 1959, p. 213; Olrik, 1909/1965, p. 137); however, other investigators have reported the occurrence of

flashforwards and flashbacks in stories from oral traditions, e.g., the Shoshone (Shimkin, 1947, p. 339) and the Toura of West Africa (Bearth, 1978, p. 215). It is not clear if these discourse/event order conventions are story conventions or general narrative conventions.

Resolution. Fischer (1963, p. 237) has stated that all stories in oral literature have a "dramatic" structure (i.e., Brewer & Lichtenstein's suspense discourse structure) and that they include some form of resolution of the conflict. However, there are some counterexamples. For example the Limba have a subgenre of "dilemma" stories in which conflict is created and deliberately not resolved (Finnegan, 1967, p. 30). It is not clear if there are conventions about stories resolving with "good" outcomes. Certainly a number of stories from oral literature have "bad" endings from the point of view of a Western reader.

Epilogue. In many oral literatures stories contain a conventionalized epilogue that makes a meta-comment on the story, gives a summary, or gives some post-resolution information about the characters. For example Clackamas stories had an obligatory explanatory segment (Jacobs, 1959, p. 247). Limba stories could have a moral, a generalizing comment, or an explanatory segment (Finnegan, 1967, p. 88). Shoshone stories could have an explanatory segment or additional information about the characters (Shimkin, 1947, p. 334). Hanga stories gave either a

summary, or a moral, or both (Hunt, 1978, p. 240). Some Sherpa stories include a moral and then a summary of the events from the story that are relevant to the moral (Schöttelndreyer, 1978, p. 265).

Closing. Conventionalized closings occur very widely. They vary from the simple "it is finished" of the Limba (Finnegan, 1967, p. 87) and "they lived happily ever after" of Western oral literature (Thompson, 1977, p. 457) to the enigmatic Shoshone "Coyote way out there is tracking through slush" (Shimkin, 1947, p. 335). In one type of closing for stories of the Fali of West Africa the linguistic form is not formulaic, but, instead a conventionalized event must be described--several dogs of different colors going hunting, killing game, and eating it (Ennulat, 1978, p. 148). However, my personal favorite is the conventionalized closing used by the Kamba of East Africa "May you become rich in vermin in your provision-shed, but I in cows in my cattle-kraal" (Finnegan, 1970, p. 380).

Narrator. In an oral tradition the individual actually telling the story is obviously the narrator. But the issue is actually somewhat more complex than that. The individual telling the story can be merely a vehicle or can intrude into the narrative and provide information and make evaluative comments. It is not completely clear from the few accounts that discuss the issue if there are story specific narrator conventions, but it seems likely. Dégh (1972, p. 61) states that in telling European

folktales there were conventionalized forms of narrator intrusion. The Khaling of Nepal have a number of linguistic devices (e.g., locative adverbs) that must be used when the narrator interrupts the sequence of events in the narrative (Toba, 1978, p. 160). Limba narrators have a word form which they use to indicate that they are about to give the audience information which is not yet known to the characters (Finnegan, 1967, p. 76). The Syuwa of Nepal show an interesting relation of narrator to narrative. The Syuwa language has a sentence final particle which indicates whether the speaker witnessed the information or that it is unverified second-hand information. In telling stories Syuwa narrators use the unverified marker for the initial sentence but then can shift to the speaker witnessed form for the rest of the story (Höhlig, 1978, p. 23-24).

Vocabulary and syntax. In addition to the conventionalized story elements discussed above there are frequently conventionalized vocabulary, morphology, and syntax (see: Jacobs, 1964, p. 332; Tedlock, 1972; Toelken, 1981). However, these more linguistic aspects of stories in oral literature will not be covered in this paper.

The purpose of this analysis of stories in oral literature was to gain some understanding about the nature of culture-specific story schemas. The framework provided by Table 1 and the cross cultural evidence outlined above give a good indication

of the types of information about content and form that are represented in culture-specific story schemas.

Stories: Written

In this section we will attempt to uncover some of the types of information that are part of the story schema for Western written stories. In keeping with the analysis of stories from the oral tradition we will focus on long narratives designed primarily for entertainment--spy novels, mystery novels, westerns, science fiction, and popular short stories. We will not examine "literary" genres in this paper. In fact, it seems unlikely that most members of Western culture have been exposed to enough examples of literary texts to have developed a schema for these genres.

Openings. One very obvious difference between written stories and oral stories is that written stories do not have a conventionalized opening. Even the most formulaic genres do not have a fixed linguistic form that must appear at the beginning of the story.

Setting. The placement of setting information in written stories has apparently undergone a change since the late 1800's. In earlier novels (e.g., Fielding, Scott, Trollope) it was conventional to place much setting information at the beginning of the discourse (Sternberg, 1978). However, in more recent fiction it has become conventional to omit the initial setting and distribute the information throughout the discourse. In

fact, O'Faolain (1963) has argued that the convention of opening a discourse with an event (e.g., "She saw him put it in his pocket.") is one of the most striking characteristics of modern fiction. The type of setting used is also often conventionalized. Thus, classic mystery stories are conventionally set in the English countryside. In popular literature the American West of the late 1800's has become a conventionalized setting, while New England mill towns of the same period have not.

Characters. The number and order of introduction of characters does not appear to be a frequently conventionalized aspect of written stories. However, the types of characters are highly conventionalized. In order to show that a character type has become conventionalized it is necessary to show that individuals of that type portrayed in stories can be distinguished from the society's general stereotypes of that type of individual. Thus detectives with extraordinary powers of reasoning are almost certainly conventionalized characters in Western written stories, since our cultural stereotype of real world detectives does not include such extraordinary powers of reasoning. Which types of individuals are chosen for inclusion is also conventionalized--note the names of several specific Western genres: detective stories, spy stories, cowboy stories. In principle one could have a genre in which a tree is discovered to be dead, the arborist is called, and through extraordinary

powers of reasoning the arborist discovers what caused the tree to die, but in practice, the detective has become a conventionalized character and the arborist has not.

Events. Many writers have noted that a basic characteristic of the events in written stories is that they are selected to provide conflict (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 36; Jaffee & Scott, 1960, p. 2-3; Perrine, 1970, p. 43). The order of events in the discourse of written stories often does not map the order of the underlying events. Both O'Faolain (1963) and Sternberg (1978) suggest that presenting events in the discourse out of their underlying order is an important convention of modern fiction. It is these event related aspects of written stories that form the core of Brewer and Lichtenstein's structural-affect theory of stories.

Western written stories also show conventionalized motifs: first contact with an alien species in science fiction, the Russian scientist who wishes to defect in the spy novel, the gun duel on Main Street in the Western.

Resolution. A number of writers have noted that the underlying structure of most written stories is a build up of tension that is resolved near the end of the discourse (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 36; Altenbernd & Lewis, 1969, p. 23). Perrine (1970, p. 44-48) notes that "inexperienced" readers have trouble appreciating modern literary works that do not resolve. There have been, in recent years, some shifts in the conventions about

outcome valence of stories (e.g., a good or bad ending). Up through the 1950's a good outcome was conventionalized for many written genres, e.g., spy stories, western, adventure stories. However, in the last few decades this story convention has become less rigid and stories with bad endings sometimes occur in these genres (Cawelti, 1976, p. 42). Perrine (1970, p. 47) comments that the frequent use of bad outcomes in modern literature is another factor which causes inexperienced readers to have problems appreciating these works. Thus, it appears that in modern entertainment fiction the "happy ending" has shifted from a rigid story convention to a somewhat weakened convention.

Epilogue. The explicit use of summaries or morals is not a convention of popular written stories, though there is some use of epilogues to give additional information about the course of events after the resolution of the basic conflict.

Closing. Apparently, modern written stories do not show an obligatory closing form. A quick sample of 20 recent paperback books (5 science fiction, 5 mystery, 5 spy, 5 best sellers) from our shelves at home showed no use of the formulaic closing "The End."

Narrator. The intrusiveness of the narrator in written stories is another convention that has shifted in written stories. During the 1800's an intrusive narrator was the conventional form. However, by the turn of the century the convention shifted and the use of unintrusive narrators became

conventional (O'Faolain, 1963, p. 52; Scholes & Kellogg, 1966, p. 268). Perhaps one of the most elaborate set of conventions in written stories are those related to point of view. Written stories have evolved a variety of techniques that involve the information available to the narrator, the location of the narrator, and the visibility of the narrator (Booth, 1961; Friedman, 1955).

Story schema. In comparing the Western written story to the oral story it appears that the written story shows less conventionalization with respect to number of story elements and the fixed location of story elements, but does have much conventionalized content (i.e., types of setting, characters, events, and resolutions). In written stories discourse organization tends to replace repetition as a device for producing affect.

The Story Schema: Universal Properties

In this section we will explore the issue of story universals. Clearly this is a speculative business. The logic of uncovering culture-specific aspects of stories is much clearer. One finds two cultures with different story conventions and contrasts them. The logic of uncovering story universals is much less certain. One examines the similarities across cultures and makes the inductive leap. Nevertheless the attempt must be made if we are to have a comprehensive theory of stories.

As with the analysis of culture-specific universals, we will distinguish phenomena occurring at the level of events, at the level of narrative, and at the level of stories.

Events

While many contents of goal-directed actions will be culture-specific the underlying use of plan schemas to understand human actions must be a universal. I find it hard to imagine a human culture in which individuals do not interpret human actions in intentional form.

Narrative

It seems clear that members of all cultures will need to be able to describe action sequences in linguistic form, so narrative will be a universal form of discourse. In narratives designed primarily for comprehension, the order of events in the discourse will map the order of the underlying events, and some setting information will be placed at the beginning of the discourse. Both of these conventions should reduce the cognitive load for the narrative understander and are derived from more general restrictions on human beings as information processors.

Stories: Oral

In this section we will look for universals in oral literature that are separate from the event universals and narrative universals. First, it appears that all cultures have a genre of long prose narratives told primarily for entertainment (Boas, 1925, p. 329; Bascom, 1965, p. 16; Fischer, 1963, p.

237, 241). It seems likely that the entertainment is produced by the activation of affective states such as suspense surprise, curiosity, humor, sexual arousal, anger, and irony. However the universal status of these particular affective states in oral stories clearly needs investigation. Similarly the status of the particular devices used in stories to produce affect need to be studied cross-culturally (see Finnegan, 1967, p. 61).

The use of conventionalized openings and closings seems to be a universal (see Dégh, 1972, p. 60-61; Finnegan, 1970, p. 379-380; Jacobs, 1964, p. 334; Olrik, 1909/1965, p. 131-132). Certain types of characters may occur in all cultures. Thus, talking animals may be universal characters (Boas, 1925, p. 333) and the hero figure may also be universal (Fischer, 1963, p. 255). It may be that characters in the oral tradition show limited characterization (Finnegan, 1967, p. 52; Tedlock, 1972, p. 130) or that the characterization is done by "showing" not by "telling" (Olrik, 1909/1965, p. 137). Another possible universal is that characterization is carried out in terms of extremes (e.g., extremely strong, or beautiful, or evil). The repetition of characters may be a universal feature of stories in the oral tradition (Jacobs, 1964, p. 334; Olrik, 1909/1965, p. 133).

The choice of events to produce particular affective states may be a universal (Fischer, 1963, p. 237), and the repetition of events in stories seems to be universal (Boas, 1925, p. 330;

Dégh, 1972, p. 61; Fischer, 1963, p. 251; Olrik, 1909/1965, p. 132-133).

Oral Literature vs. Written Literature

In this section we will compare the universals postulated to occur in stories in the oral tradition with the features found in stories from the Western written tradition and attempt to give accounts of the differences.

One major difference between written and oral literatures is genre specialization. Many oral narratives appear to be carrying out a wide variety of functions all at the same time. Thus, a single oral narrative may be doing what West written literature would do through a novel, a religious text, a history text, a scientific journal article, a dirty joke, and a philosophical essay (see Finnegan, 1967, p. 31, 63; Fischer, 1963, p. 258). Literacy, the printing press, and specialization of function in Western society have allowed the development of very specialized genres. Along with the specialization of discourse force (e.g., to inform, or to entertain, or to persuade) has gone specialization of discourse form (cf. Brewer, 1980). Thus, written texts include specialized forms such as the "pyramid style" of the newspaper article, the formulaic heading of the scientific journal article, and the inverted order of the mystery story.

The occurrence of conventionalized openings and closings in stories from the oral tradition may reflect the difference

between having a live narrator versus an "abstract" narrator in a written story. The teller of an oral story has to distinguish narratives told for entertainment from the teller's everyday discourse, and the conventionalized openings and closings may serve this function. This hypothesis is supported by Davenport's gloss for the story opening used in the Marshall Islands, "this is a fairy tale; it may or may not have happened long ago; it is not to be taken seriously; it is not always supposed to be logical" (1953, p. 224). It is also supported by the Rattray's translation of the opening of Ashanti stories, "We do not really mean, we do not really mean (that what we are going to say is true)" (1969, p. 55). In written stories this type of information is given by the book cover, by the knowledge of where the book was obtained, and by other indicators of genre.

The differences in characterization between oral and written stories may also be due to the fact that stories in the oral tradition are performed, not read. In decontextualized written stories the character information has to be placed in the discourse, but in oral stories the performer can act out the characters' emotions and internal states, so that such information need not be placed explicitly in the discourse (see, Finnegan, 1967, p. 52; Fischer, 1963, p. 237).

Finally the occurrence of repetition at a number of levels in oral stories may be a story device that is particularly successful at producing suspense in an oral performance

(Davenport, 1953, p. 226; Finnegan, 1967, p. 79; Jacobs, 1959, p. 224; Olrik, 1909/1965, p. 133; Toelken, 1981, p. 167); or it may help the narrator's fluency (Jacobs, 1964, p. 335); or serve to reduce the memory load for both the performer and the audience (Finnegan, 1977, Ch. 3).

Overall, these differences between oral and written stories can be seen as similar to the distinction Chafe (1982, in press) makes between integration and involvement in language. The decontextualized nature of written stories leads to a need for complex characterization and point of view development. The use of the written mode makes possible the elaboration of these devices and also allows complex rearrangements of the discourse order (flashbacks and flashforwards).

In contrast, the performed nature of oral stories leads to the need for conventionalized opening and closing and to the use of repetition to overcome memory limitations. The ability of the performer to dramatize some aspects of the information reduces the need to place this information explicitly in the discourse.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to uncover basic properties of the story schema. An analytic framework has been proposed that distinguishes between event schemas, narrative schemas, and story schemas. This approach provides considerable clarification of the difficult issues in this area. Applying the framework to oral literatures from a variety of cultures provides

an initial account of the nature of universal and culture-specific story schemas. Culture-specific story schemas for stories from the oral tradition tend to include a wide variety of conventions about the occurrence and discourse order of story elements such as: openings, characters, events, epilogues, and closings. Story schema universals reflect more abstract characteristics of stories, such as the use of affect to produce enjoyment and the use of repetition and parallel structure.

By contrasting the findings for oral literature with those for Western written genres it is possible to highlight the story conventions of Western written stories. The story schema for written stories tends to include fewer conventions about the number and fixed discourse order or story elements. However, like the story schema for oral stories, it does appear to include a number of conventions about the type of settings, characters, and events that are included in stories. The written story schema tends to use discourse organization instead of repetition ot produce affect (cf. Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981, 1982, submitted). The story schema for written stories tends to show explicit character description, and elaborate development of narrator point of view. Finally, it is possible to account for some of the differences between the story schema for oral and written stories by taking into account the fact that oral stories are performed by narrators, while written stories are experienced in a decontextualized setting.

May you become rich in vermin in your provision-shed, but I in cows in my cattle-kraal.

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Table 1

Possible Story Conventions

Narrative Elements	Discourse Options					
	Presence/ Absence	Explicitness	Type	Discourse Order		
				Initial Introduction	Repeated	Mapped/ Reordered
Opening						
Setting (time & location)						
Characters						
Events						
Resolution						
Epilogue (morals evaluations & explanations)						
Closing						
Narrator						

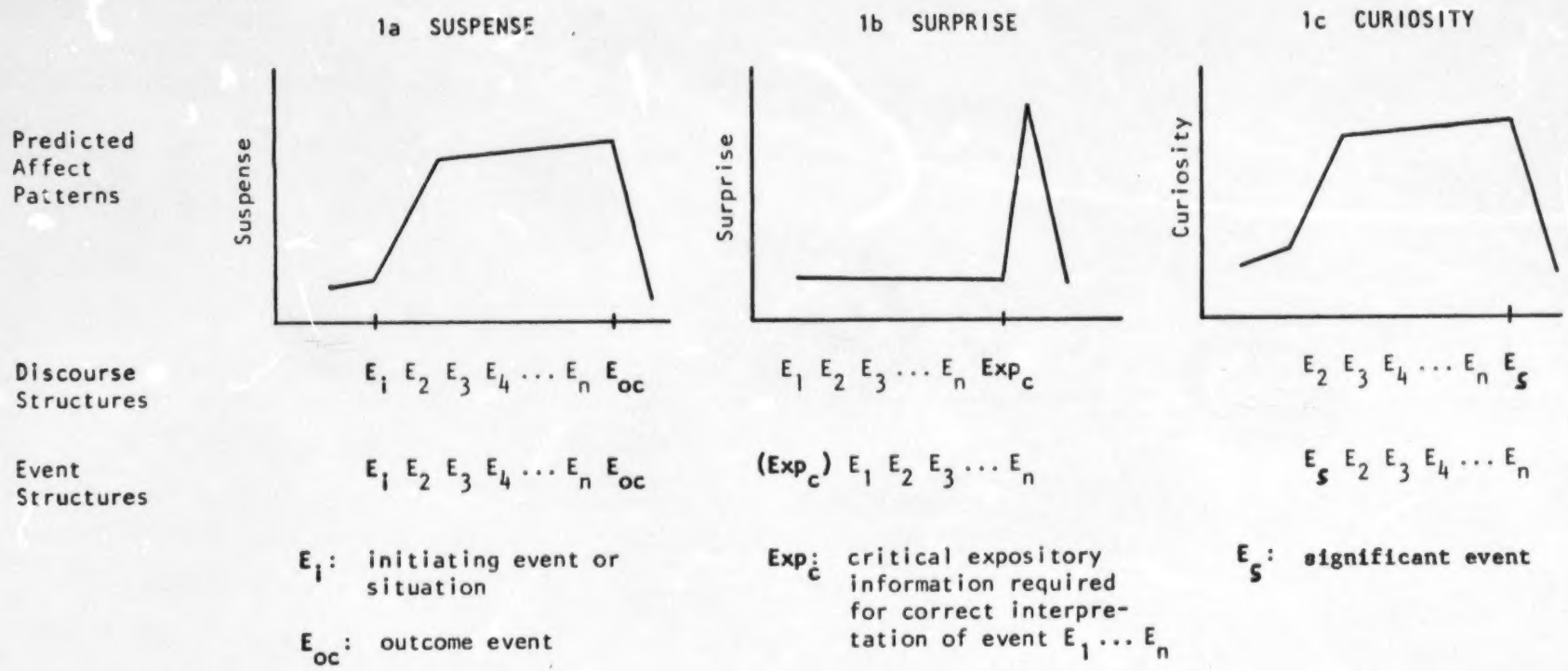
1a SUSPENSE
1b SURPRISE
1c CURIOSITY
Predicted Affect Patterns
Suspense
Surprise
Curiosity
Discourse Structures
$E_i\ E_2\ E_3\ E_4 \ldots E_n\ E_{oc}$
$E_1\ E_2\ E_3 \ldots E_n\ Exp_c$
$E_2\ E_3\ E_4 \ldots E_n\ E_s$
Event Structures
$E_i\ E_2\ E_3\ E_4 \ldots E_n\ E_{oc}$
$(Exp_c)\ E_1\ E_2\ E_3 \ldots E_n$
$E_s\ E_2\ E_3\ E_4 \ldots E_n$
E_i: initiating event or situation
E_{oc}: outcome event
Exp_c: critical expository information required for correct interpretation of event $E_1 \ldots E_n$
E_s: significant event

Figure 1. The relationships between the information required in the event structures, the sequencing of this information in the discourse structures, and the predicted patterns of affective response for Suspense, Surprise and Curiosity.

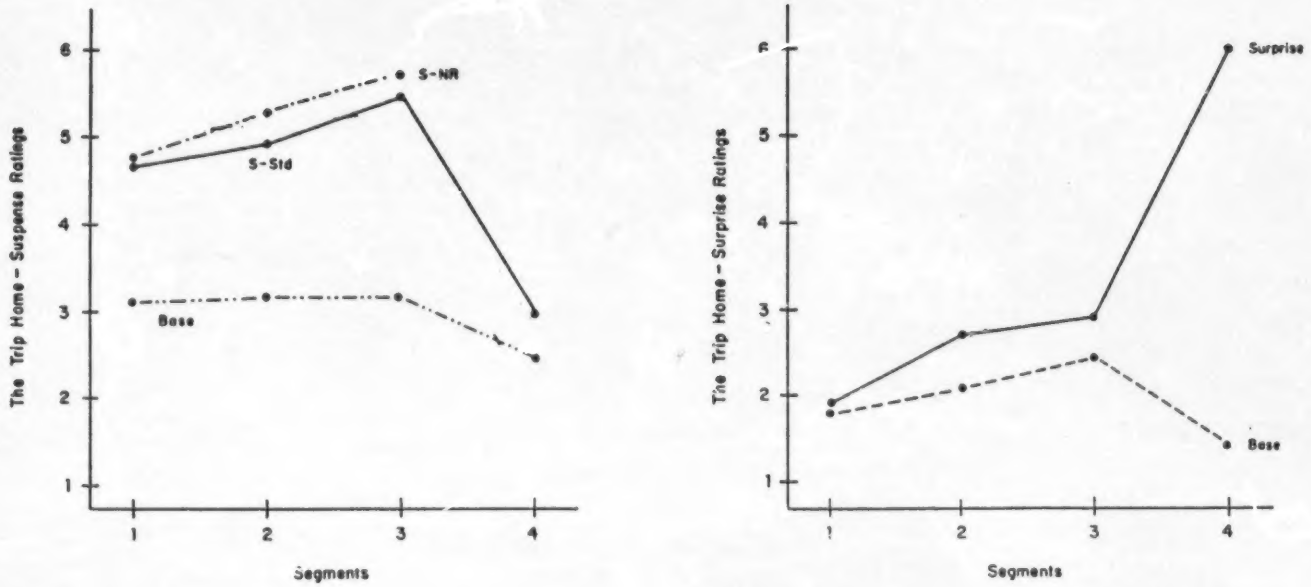

Figure 2. Mean suspense and surprise ratings for four different versions of The Trip Home (modified from Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981).

Base: No initiating event or outcome event.

S-Std: Initiating event and outcome event included.

S-NR:: Initiating event but no outcome event.

Surprise: Critical information at end of discourse.